

'Gators' Get World Turned Upside-Down

By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim
2nd BCT Public Affairs

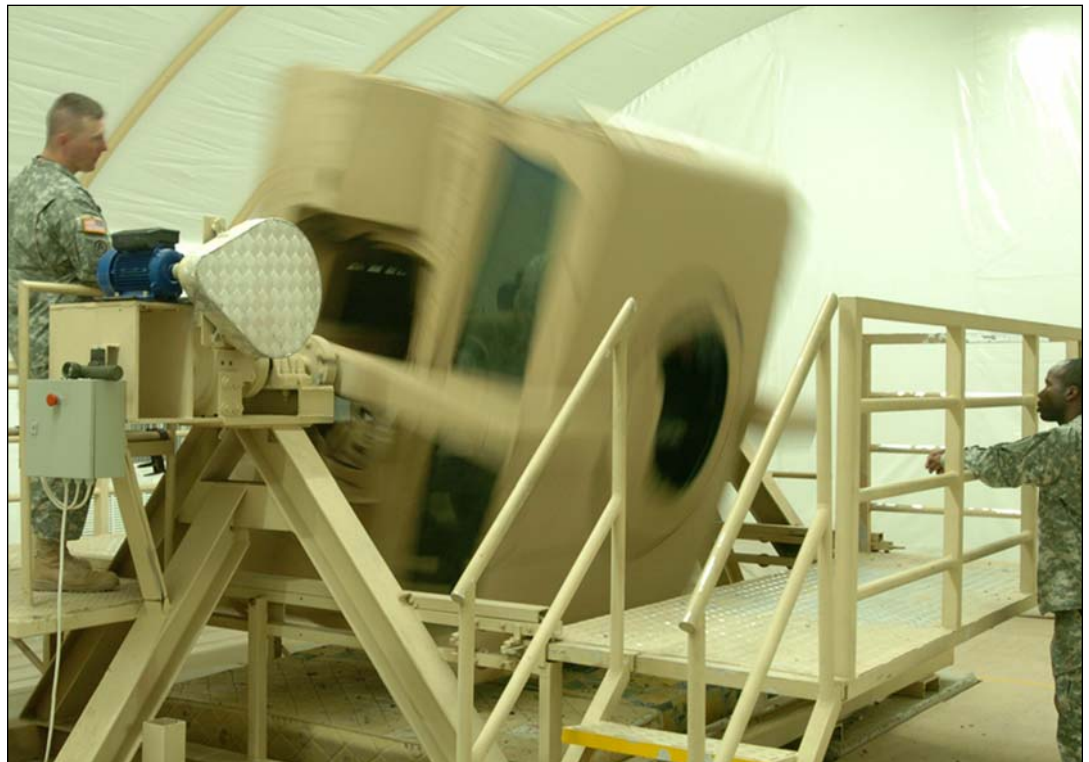
CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait - "Hopefully you don't have to use this training," said Sgt. Marshall Lindsay, one of the trainers of the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer here.

More than 15 Soldiers from the "Gators," Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, took turns being tossed around the up-armored humvee, which was rigged on a rotisserie, at the HEAT tent Nov. 1.

"I learned what it actually felt like to rollover," said Pfc. Kevin Bokman, a Martinsville, Va. native.

During the training, the instructors gave each of the Soldiers an opportunity to change positions within the up-armored humvee.

The Soldiers learned what to do in the event of a rollover, how to exit the vehicle, and procedures for pulling security. The Soldiers experienced what



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

Soldiers from Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment get rolled around in a humvee simulator during their training at Camp Buehring, Kuwait Nov. 1.

it was like to not only go through a rollover, but also how to communicate with one another during and after the rollover as well. The Gator

Soldiers said they know how important the rollover training was because of their mission in Iraq.

Having a machine that

simulates a humvee flipping onto its top was another bene-

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Personnel Team Takes Tracking Troops Personal

By Spc. Alexis Harrison,
2nd BCT Public Affairs

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait - Being a part of a brigade-sized unit can sometimes be, well, confusing.

Now, imagine keeping track of the thousands of Soldiers who moved from Fort Hood, Texas, to Kuwait..

Sound tough? Not for the members of

the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team's administration team.

The 2nd BCT, 1st Cavalry Division, Personnel Section has been keeping watch over every Soldier who has made the journey since the brigade began leaving Texas.

"So far, it's been easy," said Warrant Officer Jamie Alanso, an Alvin, Texas, native and military personnel techni-

cian.

Maj. David Welch, the brigade adjutant, said Soldiers beginning their journey overseas are tracked from the very start. He continued by saying every Soldier is verified on every flight coming from Fort Hood.

"It's virtually impossible to lose some-

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Third Time's A Charm: Troop Heads Back to Iraq

By Sgt. Nicole Kojetin
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait - While most Soldiers are grumbling and complaining about waking up to do physical training, there is one noncommissioned officer who cannot wait to get out of bed.

"I don't think I could find any other employment that would give me an excellent workout like the Army does," said Sgt. Michelle James, a retention NCO officer with Headquarters Support Company, 1st Cavalry Division. "Well... you could be a personal trainer."

But that's not what she wants. As Army recruiters walk the halls of high schools and colleges searching for people, James was searching for them.

"Sometimes something crosses your path and you just know that is what you are supposed to do," James said.

She packed up and left her suburb of Los Angeles, nicknamed "Candy Country," and moved on to a new life filled with combat boots and sand. James started her career as a



(Photo by Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Sgt. Michelle James, a retention non-commissioned officer with the Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, works on her close-quarter marksmanship during training in Kuwait.

truck driver out of Fort Campbell, Ky. and she said she has put in nearly 9 million miles on her vehicles in Iraq. The danger was real and she tries to share that with others.

Part of the training she attended in Kuwait, was convoy live-fire training, and with all those miles, she knows what matters.

"(The instructors) brought into play everything that you needed to know, like preparations, what to look for, and how to

react to (improvised explosive devices), small arms fire and mortars."

In the seven years she has been in, James has deployed to Iraq twice, and is on her way once again. James said that she learned a valuable lesson through her tours.

"I had never been shot at before," she said. "The first time it happened, I realized that I needed to be more thankful, and pay more attention to my family."

Her mission is slightly different now that she is in retention. But she said a truck driver and retention NOC have one thing in common: they work to get Soldiers what they want.

James is planning on staying in for at least 20 years, and she said she doesn't regret a second spent in the Army so far.

"I think it is good for everyone to serve their country just to understand how it is, and take advantage of the experience," she said. "I have met some awesome people, and my co-workers are irreplaceable. There are some people who really have their heart into it, and that really brings us together. As tough as a Soldier is, we still have a heart."

Arabic Phrase of the Day

sh-ismak?

**Defined: What
is your name?**

Iraq 3-Day Forecast



Today

High: 75
Low: 49



Tomorrow

High: 77
Low: 50



Thursday

High: 70
Low: 48

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Realistic Training

'Gators' Learn to Survive a Rollover

Gators

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fit. The Soldiers said going upside down seemed to just "reverse" everything inside the vehicle. Just when the Soldiers learned what to do, the trainers turned out the lights.

"It scares you," said Pfc. Michael Jackson of Double Springs, Ala. "There's a lot of loose gear like ammo cans that can hit you in the face."

The other thing that Jackson said he worries about is his position inside the humvee.

"I'm a gunner," he said. "So, if I don't get in, in enough time, it could crush me."

According to Holloway, the easiest position in the humvee is being in the dri-



(Photo By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

Soldiers from Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment get rolled around in a humvee simulator during their training in Kuwait Nov. 1.

ver's seat.

"You have the steering wheel to hold onto," he said.

The toughest position is being in the

gunner's hatch or the backseats because you have very little to hold onto.

Undoing your seatbelt and finding that you immediately drop to the ceiling of the vehicle wasn't a pleasant experience, Jackson said.

Rolling over in the dark was one of the biggest challenges according to most of the Soldiers. Then, fumbling around to unlock the door handle posed the biggest problem for Holloway.

"[In the dark], everyone was stepping on each other," said Jackson.

All in all, the Soldiers said the training was not tough and most enjoyed it like an amusement park ride.

"It wasn't tough at all," said Pfc. Michael Holloway, of Kerrville, Texas. "When it's rolling over, it's tough to control it."



(Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

Soldiers step off a chartered bus delivering them to Camp Buehring, Kuwait. The personnel team for the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team processed thousands of Soldiers within a few days

Troops Bussed to Caring Arms of BCT Personnel

Tracking

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one during the transition process," said Welch, a native of Knoxville, Tenn.

Alonso added that this trip has been much easier than her last deployment to the Middle East. Then she was still in the enlisted ranks, as a staff sergeant. She said the new "Boots on the Ground" program has brought more stability to deployments.

The program is designed so that when more than 50 percent of a unit has made the journey, the year-long clock begins ticking toward their redeployment home. As of Oct. 23, the clock has started for the Black Jack Brigade.

Alonso said that during her last deployment, there was no way to

track which units spent the most time in theater. She said sometimes units would come and go while others spent a lot longer in the war zone.

"It's only fair that if you got here first, you get to leave first," Alonso said.

Welch said that "Boots on the Ground" isn't the only thing that's made life easier to troops in Iraq. He said the introduction of the Eagle Cash Card might help to reduce the need for things like casual pays.

Welch explained that, in the past, a Soldier on a forward operations base would have to wait for a finance team to come to them in order for any financial transactions to take place. However, with the new cards, kiosks will be placed throughout areas of operation to decrease the need for Soldiers to be put in harms way just to get some spending money.

Soldiers Find a Home Away from Home

By Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait - Smiles and jokes complemented the laughter intertwined with meal-time conversation that lingered around the table. A feeling of ease fell over everyone at the table decorated with plates of homemade pancit, a dish based with a thin noodle sprinkled with vegetables, chicken and shrimp, steamed white rice and pinakbit, a dish of sautéed vegetables with meat.

Although their time in country has just begun, a handful of 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers with Filipino ancestry have already found a place that brings them home, momentarily that is.

An aerobics instructor Mayette Sarte Creson, a native of Naga City, Bicol Region, Philippines, brought a "family atmosphere" to the table in a caring, motherly way to these deployed Soldiers.

As music played in the background Creson repeated for everyone to "Eat, now" in Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines. "Kain na," she echoed.

In Filipino culture, she said it's important that everyone feels comfortable and at home.

Creson said that although the homemade meal delivery started off with her bringing some food from home for lunch, it quickly became a gathering of friends with a bunch of homemade food.

"I try to treat people like family," Creson admitted. "If people like what I am having I'm willing to share it with them and, shockingly, they are not always Filipino."

"Food is for everybody,"



(Photo by Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Sgt 1st Class Oscar Lopez, a combat medic with Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, gets ready to scoop up some sinigang, a Filipino soup. Lopez is a Colorado Springs, Colo., native who is on his second rotation in Iraq with the division.

she said. "It's universal."

She said that she met an Army captain who was Caucasian, but loved Filipino food because his wife was Filipino. She said it is interesting meeting people with connections to her way of life and culture.

Some Soldiers Creson has come across have been stationed on the Philippine Islands, others have family and friends who are Filipino and there are those people who are just open-minded and willing to experience different cultures and try foreign dishes, she said.

"Sharing the food and

the culture with others gives other ethnic cultures a taste of what our culture has," said Staff Sgt. Glenn Trinidad with Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. "For example, the captain that was with us, instead of just having just burgers and steaks, his sense of cuisine taste has been broadened because of his wife."

Trinidad's wife, Shelia, made him caldareta, a Filipino dish of beef smothered in a special sauce, right before he deployed. He left behind his

wife and two children in central Texas.

"It is one of my favorite dishes that my wife makes for me," the telecommunications center operator added.

"I am the type of person that will share anything if they are willing to try new things," explained Creson about the different types of dishes she brings in to work for lunch.

For many, the smells of these entrees remind them of home.

"The first time I tasted her pinakbit it was like 'Oh my god!'" Trinidad said. "It gave me that sense of 'Wow!' My eyes rolled back and I was back home for a second."

Simply by talking to people, Staff 1st Class Oscar Lopez, Staff Sgt. Scott Diaz, Staff Sgt. Marbil Llanes and Trinidad found Creson in her aerobics tent. All of them are Filipino Soldiers with Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.

"It was word of mouth amongst the Filipinos in the area. We met someone who was Filipino and through that we found her and she actually invited us to come in to eat," Trinidad said. The invitation to sit down for a meal was a pleasant surprise for the troops, but in keeping with the Filipino culture.

"I (had no idea) that I'd be eating my ethnic origin's type of cuisine in a deployed area," he continued. "I was thinking potatoes, rice, steak, and chicken - mess hall stuff. It was very surprising. I can't believe I found Filipino food here."

"With each spoonful, I got a little sense of home," Trinidad said.